

The Electric Mercury

U.S. Army Medical Command Electronic News Summary, January 2003

**For more on these and other important stories, see January 2003 printed issue of The Mercury.
This is a service of the Public Affairs Office, Headquarters MEDCOM.**

Innovative ideas earn units Excalibur Awards

Fort Hood, Texas, MEDDAC; AMEDD Center and School; 82nd Airborne Division; and Kentucky Army National Guard's 1163rd Area Support Medical Company win The Surgeon General's Excalibur Awards for 2002. Fort Hood MEDDAC was cited for its disease-state management clinic for hypertension, hyperlipidemia, diabetes and asthma; AMEDD Center and School for a satellite broadcast symposium in the Physician Assistant Recertification course; 82nd Airborne for creating a fully staffed and equipped training center teaching the Trauma AIMS and Basic Trauma Life Support curriculums; and the 1163rd ASMC for conserving resources by working with units at Fort Campbell, Ky., and the video teletraining team at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, for 91W transition training.

New rules on patient privacy take effect April 14

Keeping health-care information private is a basic right of beneficiaries of DoD's Military Health System (MHS) and TRICARE. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) of 1996 created "privacy rules" that all health-care providers must follow. TRICARE will implement the rules on April 14. You have the right to receive a notice of privacy practices from your medical treatment facility; to review and get a copy of your medical record; request changes or correct errors in your record; know how, when and to whom your information is disclosed; file grievances regarding privacy; and give written instructions on your preferences regarding use/disclosure of your information.

More soldiers to get gift from taxman

Tax changes affecting reportable income for this year will mean more service members qualify for earned income tax credit, officials say. Congress has changed the way income is figured and the credit is paid. Uniformed military members will be main beneficiaries. Basic allowances for housing and subsistence and pay excluded from income due to combat-zone service will not be counted as earned income when computing the credit.

PDAs show promise for high-tech medics

AMEDD's Telemedicine and Advanced Technology Research Center explores how Medical Personal Digital Assistants can streamline work of military caregivers,

especially to ensure fast and accurate input into permanent medical records in field situations.

Other important stories in the January *Mercury* include:

- AMEDD budget is less than needed and DoD leaders realize that, writes LTG James B. Peake, Army Surgeon General and MEDCOM commander. However, the AMEDD can help itself by documenting services properly for collection of third-party insurance.
- Better delivery, fewer shots, fewer reactions are goals of an anthrax vaccine study by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.
- Almost half of MEDCOM replied to the FY 2002 Command Climate Survey. They identified these strengths: work group, human relations, supervisor and job satisfaction. They said leadership, care of people, quality of life, and resources need improvement.
- Army Reserve stress-control unit works seven days a week in Afghanistan to help U.S. soldiers cope with combat stress and other kinds of pressures.
- U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine-Europe team identifies hazards in Afghanistan and helps devise measures to reduce or cope with them.
- Page of words and photos shows how Army medics are helping the Afghan people with basic health services through MEDCAPs (Medical Civic Action Programs).
- Walter Reed Army Institute of Research entomologist relates adventures of six months as Third Medical Command preventive-medicine chief, in Afghanistan and Central Asia.
- Association of Military Surgeons of the U.S. honors 11 AMEDD people for 2002 accomplishments and eight for 2001 (last year's conference was cancelled due to war).
- Three talented soldier-medics are touring military bases with the BRAVO! Army Theatre Touring Company production *Lift Up Your Heart, America*.
- Pride in the AMEDD's lifesaving mission and pioneering approach can get you through down days, says Mike Meines (second in series on customer-service ethic).
- Background page explains modern Iraq's history, geography, economy, etc. A side article describes the special health hazards presented by the Iraqi environment.
- Photos: U.S. Army veterinary people treat goats in Afghanistan; SPC Anthony Sloan of Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Germany, works with German medical personnel in exercise; Angie Young, employee of Pacific Telehealth and Technology Hui at Tripler Army Medical Center, plays quarterback for the all-female Pacific Blast football team.
- Commentary: "On what road will human DNA mapping take us?" by LTC Roman Bilynsky explores promise and risks of genetic research; "Modest auditor shares credit,"

a letter from AMEDD Auditor of the Year Ruth Darling, stresses the role others played in the progress for which her auditing activity was honored; and “CDC site provides list of health hoaxes” publicizes website that exposes medical hoaxes.